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CIA 2-042 book sponsors

Book Firm

Spells Out CIA Ties

By ARTHUR GREENSPAN

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A major book publisher today gave the New York Post details of his firm's links with the Central Intelligence Agency.

And another industry source said that "at least two other major publishers have put out books by an organization which received CIA money through a conduit."

Frederick A. Praeger, in telling how his firm had received CIA money, said:

"Less than 1 per cent of all book projects we've ever published or been engaged in have any CIA connection."

"The CIA never actually prepared or ordered printed any book itself."

"Praeger retained the ultimate decision as to whether or not his firm would publish any given book, based upon academic quality and truth."

"The firm actually lost money in handling the CIA books."

The Praeger firm has offices at 111 Fourth Av., as well as in Washington and London. Last April, it was purchased by Encyclopedia Britannica, but under that arrangement Praeger remained in charge of the book house with complete control of books he publishes.

Praeger, a native of Vienna, is a naturalized citizen who has been in the U. S. since 1938 and served in U. S. Army intelligence during World War II. He says he regards as his mission in life the preservation of American democratic institutions.

"I have friends in the CIA as well as in other government organizations—USIA, the Pentagon, the State Dept," he said.

"And if I considered that it furthered the interests of the country, I did not refuse my help. We have a way of life worth preserving. We have an obligation to help anti-totalitarian organizations throughout the world."

"I have knowledge of CIA projects involving facts, data, information and interpretation of events and conditions in the Communist world. And I have helped to publish books on these fields, limiting the volume of

abilities of the use of truth in psychological warfare.

"These are my guiding principles: facts, balance, fairness, scholarship, the highest kind of scholarship available . . . the absolute minimum we have to provide are facts and truth."

Who writes these books? "There are a number of people who have had jobs at CIA who are publishing the most knowledgeable academic works. Some may still be with the agency."

"It is my duty as a publisher to get the best possible book on a subject. If the writer happens

to be a CIA man expert in the field, it makes no difference."

"My assumption is that if a man has had access to material such as the CIA files, he probably will use it. But if a man leaves the CIA and goes to a university, this doesn't make him a non-scholar."

Praeger insists "the posture of this publishing house has been anti-totalitarianism and libertarian since the day it was founded. Part of my purpose in life is to provide the truth," he said.

In this light, Praeger was asked about the company's profits from such work. He said there were none:

"In terms of income to the company, whatever assistance I was able to give to various agencies was extremely costly. And in terms of economics, it could only be that I regard this as an obligation, a duty to my country."

Praeger said "insofar as is possible, I try to give my friends at the various agencies my professional advice on my fields of interest, which happen to be international affairs and communism."

He deplored the recent at-

tacks on the CIA which have been filling newspaper columns

"I deplore the self-righteous hounding of this agency, the witch-hunt. I'm sure they did many things horribly wrong."

"But fundamentally, they're honest men trying to do the best job they can, as honestly and as decently as they can."

"I think the U. S. government has an obligation to assist in the dissemination of truth and fact. I do not think it is wrong to assist one's government. I take a certain amount of pride in being asked to undertake

such work, if the work is useful."

He pointed out that his firm publishes "a lot of books critical of the U. S. government." Books by Bernard Fall, killed this week in Viet Nam, for example.

truth, content and overall quality of the literary product."

While admitting his CIA connections, Praeger declined to identify any particular books or authors involved in these projects or to say how his "1 per cent" figure was arrived at.

"What specific books or project? This I will not say."

But Praeger insisted he was not bound by any CIA-imposed secrecy.

"I have never signed any secrecy agreement, nor am I bound by any oath," he said.

A look at the Praeger catalogue shows a heavy concentration of books about international affairs, particularly with Russian and Chinese economic and ideological problems. It has often been thought by many in publishing that such books might have originated, in some way, through the CIA.

Praeger would not confirm nor deny this, but gave the following example of how such books came to be printed by his firm:

"Let us say someone in an organization is developing a book, and I suspect or know that he is in the CIA. Well, this material has been prepared by a responsible writer, and I evaluate it. I, and I alone, will decide whether I publish it, after I have sent the manuscript to several of the author's peers for their assessment."

"I did not say I have knowledge of any case, or even any suspicion, of any instance in which the agency itself has prepared such a book."

"In all cases, any discussion of the issues concerns the pos-